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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8141  
INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3522  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 5903  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 4923  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0023  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0781  
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA PRIORITY 0032  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 3886

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000141

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STATE FOR EUR/SCE, NEA/RA AND NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2018

TAGS: PREL PBTS PGOV UNMIK UN YI MO

SUBJECT: DEMARCHING MOROCCO ON KOSOVO

REF: A. STATE 015111

1B. STATE 013716

1C. STATE 14285

Classified By: DCM Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: NEA DAS Gordon Gray urged support for the upcoming independence for Kosovo February 8, during a meeting with Moroccan Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri otherwise devoted to S/CT Dailey's call for support on foreign fighters going to Iraq (septel). FM Fassi Fihri declined to offer a firm response, while outlining Morocco's conflicted views. The GOM is sympathetic toward the Kosovars but apprehensive about secession, he said. This is fueled by concern over Morocco's most important issue: the Western Sahara. Embassy followed up with ref A as received and has received no further substantive response. It does not appear Morocco would act in the near term, but an OIC consensus would positively affect their calculations. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Gray, who in addition to Dailey was accompanied by Ambassador and PolCouns, said that the USG expected a declaration of independence soon, and that when it comes we will recognize Kosovo. We understand the European Union will do the same. The USG is asking our friends to join us in this step, which will bring stability to the region.

13. (C) The Foreign Minister described the conflicted Moroccan appreciation of the Kosovo situation. He personally thought Kosovo needed independence. The former Yugoslavia broke into many independent states, except for Kosovo, whose entitlement is clear in principle. Why can a mini-State be permitted in Montenegro and denied to the Muslims of Kosovo?

14. (C) There are problems, however, the Minister continued. Many states could not support independence, citing Muslim Indonesia, which feared a fait accompli and faced the threat of being itself riven by seven thousand Kosovos. Morocco itself feared Kosovo independence would be exploited by "our neighbors," who continually cite the independence of East Timor as a precedent for Sahara. (This was a clear reference to Algeria and its backing for the independence for Western Sahara.) He also peripherally noted Russian lobbying on the issue. He understood the Netherlands also had reservations. He understood that the question would be discussed at the upcoming OIC meeting in Dakar on March 14, which could provide hesitant states like Indonesia and Libya with an umbrella.

¶5. (C) Gray responded directly to the Minister's Sahara-based reservations. He pointed out that Kosovo will be a viable state. The USG believes the Western Sahara could never be viable and would never be a state.

¶6. (C) Embassy followed up on receipt of reftels and conveyed detailed demarche to senior MFA officials. Director-General for Bilateral Affairs Youssef Amrani accepted the message, including ref C arguments on the *sui generis* nature of Kosovo independence, but could provide no further substantive response than that given by the Minister.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: Because of overwhelming importance of the Sahara issue to Morocco, it is not likely that the GOM will quickly recognize Kosovo. Out of respect for our close bilateral relations, and reflecting their cultural norms, we do not expect them to give us an explicit no. Perhaps in the face of consensus Islamic states support this might change, particularly over the long term, and we will continue to pursue the issue. Despite the FM's mention, we do not believe that Russian lobbying is a significant factor in their consideration. END COMMENT.

¶8. (U) DAS Gray has cleared this message.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>  
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Riley